FROM THE CREATOR OF *MUGEN SPIRAL* AND *NG LIFE*

game X rush™

Mizuho Kusanagi

VOL 2

TOKYOPOP

TOKYOPOP

game X rush

mizuho kusanagi

Japan's greatest bodyguard and greatest assassin caught in a deadly game...

The mystery behind Yuuki's sordid past is revealed, but can Memori tell the difference between what is fact and what is fiction? And what if the truth has something to do with Memori's own mysterious past?

From the creator of *Mugen Spiral* and *NG Life* comes hot bishonen action with a deadly twist!

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漫画革命

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OLDER TEEN
AGE 16+

DRAMA

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gameXrush™

Volume 2
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Created by:
Mizuho Kusanagi

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(12 Years of Being Loved) 189

GAME 7
gameXrush

Ken: Age 17
Himiko: Age 16
Little Memori: Age 7
I felt like drawing a scene from when Ken used to be a bodyguard. Himiko and Ken actually met for the first time when Ken was on a case... Himiko was the client! Turns out Ken didn't even have to **try** to be popular, hee hee

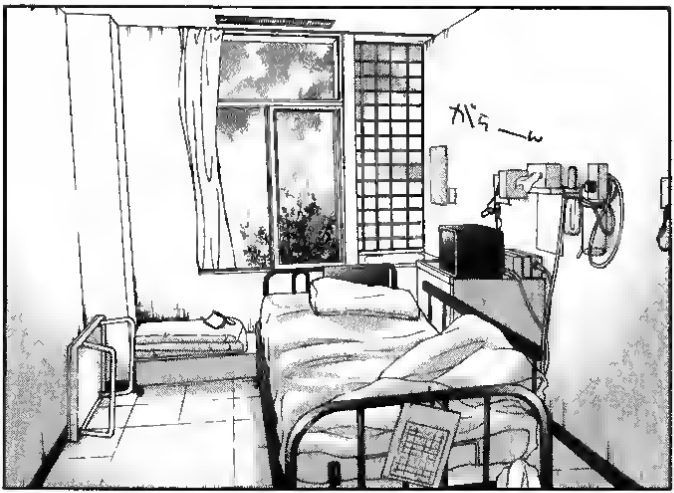
Now, let's get to Game X Rush Volume 2!

Character Memo
Sayako Oumi, age 13
DOB: 4/19 (Aries)
Blood type: Type O
Height: 142 cm

Despite how young she is, Sayako is actually smarter and more mature than most adults - not to mention, she was raised like a princess. That's always my favorite type of girl XD I'm so glad I've gotten to use her in more of the story!

NOW, ALL THAT'S LEFT IS STORMING YUUKI'S HOSPITAL ROOM.
ALL RIGHT...I'M READY FOR A FIGHT!
...AFTER I OPEN THE DOOR?!
BUT WHAT DO I DO...
.....
.....
THIS IS IT!
Dramatization
GUESS THIS MEANS I SHOULD START OFF BEING FRIENDLY
GREETINGS, DEAREST FRIEND! HOW FARE THEE?
☆
Bursting with kindness!
OH, RIGHT. HE TOOK A REALLY INTENSE HIT FOR ME...
THERE'S SO MUCH I WANT TO ASK HIM.
NOW,YOU'RE CHECKING ON HIS RECOVERY, SO BE NICE! NO FIGHTING LIKE YOU TWO USUALLY DO. ♡
KUKUCHI-SAN TOLD ME...

NOW SAY, AAAAH...
COULD... COULD YOU SLICE SOME FRUIT FOR ME?
OH, SPLENDID!
BUT OF COURSE! WILL AN APPLE DO?
That Yuuki on Memori's hand
I'M SO MOVED!
WHY, MEMORI-CHAN! YOU'VE COME TO SEE ME!
PLEASE, YUUKI, YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND.
AND...AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO PEEL AN APPLE!
I'LL NEVER GET THE IMAGE OUT OF MY HEAD! HOW CAN I ACT NICE TO THAT SORRY TRAITOR?!
GOD, THAT WAS TERRIBLE!
SHIVER SHIVER SHIVER
DIE, DIE, DIE, DIE, DIE!!
DWELLING ON IT WON'T GET ME ANYWHERE! IT'S TIME TO ACT!
YO-HO! YOU IS GOODS TODAY?!
BUT MAYBE HE'S STILL UPSET ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
SMASH SMASH SMASH



Huh
?!

DON'T TELL ME HE WENT OUT THE WINDOW!
NO WAY!
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ON BEDREST, SO HE COULDN'T HAVE---
HE'S... NOT HERE?

Greetings! This is Mizuho Kusanagi, and you're reading the second and final volume of Game X Rush. It was while I was writing chapter five that the decision was made to end this story after 12 chapters. That's why volume two has needed to dive into the core of the story as quickly as possible.

I chose the most interesting episodes from those I had wanted to write, and I just hope I created a work that my readers can connect with. ^^

This volume forced me to do six chapters back-to-back, compared to only three at one time for volume one. Through that, I got a taste of what it means to have to draw 30 pages (that'd be the sixth chapter of this book) in only two weeks. Gah!

And I had to wrap up everything in the sixth chapter! You have no idea how many times I panicked, but I was able to get through it thanks to the support of my editor and little sister. ^^ They've been real lifesavers.

However, in the end, I think it was all worth it.

Now that I'm looking back on it, that is. Ha ha!

My little sister is like a second editor, hee!

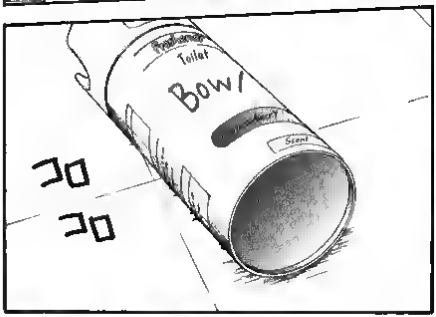
WHAT THE---?!
SORRY, PAL...
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE...
I APPRECIATE THE CAKE, BUT...
...NO THANK!!
WHY, YOU DIRTY LITTLE---!
UGH!
...AND I DON'T EVEN NEED A BEDSHEET TO DO IT! HA HA!

MORON.
WWWWWWW
IIEEIIWW
AAAAUGH, MY POOR STOMACH... I THINK I'M GONNA PUKE...!
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT TO HAPPEN?
OF ALL THE STUPID~~! WHY CAN'T YOU JUST SIT STILL?!
S-SAYA-CHAN?

I WON'T DO IT AGAIN...
YOU NEED YOUR REST, SO STAY PUT! THIS TIME, I'M PUTTING YOU UNDER SURVEILLANCE WITH MY BEST PAIR OF BODYGUARDS!
I'M BORED TO DEATH!
IT'S BEEN FIVE WHOLE DAYS! I GOTTA GET OUT OF HEEEEEERE!
BUT IT IS MY FAULT!
NAH, DON'T BLAME YOURSELF, SAYA-CHAN!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. I WON'T PULL ANYTHING AGAIN, SO RELAX.
PLEASE, JUST STAY HERE UNTIL YOU'RE ALL BETTER.
IT'S MY FAULT YOU GOT HURT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
Tee hee!
Puffy Trip
I can go by myself, you know.
PROMISE?
SURE!
BY THE WAY, MIND IF I USE THE BATHROOM?

C'MERE.
NO WAY, MAN. YOU ARE NOT COMING INTO THE BATHROOM WITH ME!
Has to take off his handcuffs.
HOW'S YOUR STOMACH WOUND DOING?
PFFT, I SHOULD BE ASKING YOU HOW YOU'RE DOING! YOU TOOK A PRETTY HEAVY BEATING BESIDE ME, REMEMBER?
NOT TO MENTION I JUST KICKED YOU IN THE FACE!
MUST... STAY...COOL. FIGHTING WON'T GET ME ANYWHERE.
Ha ha ha!
I WANT TO GET TO KNOW HIM BETTER, BUT WHERE DO I EVEN START?
...THAT YOU CAME TO VISIT.
BUT I'M GLAD...
NO ONE ELSE BUT SAVA-CHAN CAME BY TO SEE ME.

W-WELL, I'M REALLY NOTHIN' SPECIAL...
OH, BUT YOU ARE.
UH, UN...
AT LEAST NOW I WON'T BE SO BORED!
WHENEVER YOU'RE AROUND...
PSSSSH
...I'M NEVER BORED!!
WHAT THE...?!
ACK!



※ Please don't try this at home, kids. Especially any troublemakers.

GET WITH THE TIMES, SAYAKO.
Erg'
MEMORI-KUN! I HEARD THAT YUUKI-KUN ESCAPED AGAIN!
HE...HE CALLED ME BY MY FIRST NAME!
I'D LIKE TO TARE YOU UP ON THE TASK.
NO, SHE SAID SURVEIL-LANCE!
YOU SAID YOU'D PUT HIM UNDER CON-FINE-MENT NEXT TIME HE ES-CAPED--
I MUST THANK YOU, YUUKI.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS, BEFORE ...
...BUT NOW, I'VE FOUND MY LIFE'S CALLING.
For what?
You're so co
Fujisaka-sa
NOT SO FAST.
YOU'VE FINALLY DECIDED TO JOIN MY COMPANY?!

Guess he won't be getting any rest after all.
YOU'RE TOO EXCITED ABOUT THIS.
Bwaaaha ha ha! This is gonna be fun!
SLAP SLA
FROM NOW ON, I'M GONNA KEEP SUCH A CLOSE EYE ON YOU THAT YOU'LL NEVER GET THE CHANCE TO ESCAPE AGAIN!
HMPH...
I CAN'T KEEP STAYING HERE!
IT'S BEEN NEARLY A WEEK...
Y-YES, MA'AM. I JUST NEEDED SOME FRESH AIR--
Gulp!
NOW, WHILE THE COAST IS CLEAR...
MEMORI-CHAN MUST'VE GONE HOME.
KEEP AN EYE ON ME, MY ASS! NOT WHEN VISITING HOURS ARE OVER!
YUUKI-SAN? IT'S TIME FOR LIGHTS OUT!

GYAAAAHAA!
It's Nurse Memori!
Cold
WELL THEN, THEN LET ME COOL YOU DOWN ALL NIGHT.
ガシッ
WHO THE HELL WOULD WANT TO SEE YOU IN THAT?!
CONSIDER IT FAN-SERVICE FOR THE READERS.
Stay away!
NOW YOU LOOK SUSPICIOUS AND CREEPY! WHY'D YOU CHOOSE A NURSE, ANYWAY?!
At least go for a doctor!
I NEEDED TO STAY IN THE HOSPITAL WITHOUT AROUSING SUSPICION.
M-MEMORI-CHAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' DRESSED LIKE THAT?!
ドスドス
ドスドス
Nurse Memori's skirt is too tight to run in.
LET'S TRY THIS ONCE MORE FROM THE TOP.
NOW HE'S CHANGING IN FRONT OF ME?!
YOU SHOULD'VE DONE THAT FROM THE START.
Please, just go away.
ぎっ
I D-DON'T WANNA BE CHASED BY A GUY IN A SKIRT ANYMORE. I'M GOING TO SLEEP!
YOU PLAN ON ES-CAPING AGAIN?
I'm just a poor little boy.
GOOD.

MEMORI-CHAN, THAT'S MY HEAD.
WHY ARE YOU SO DESPERATE TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL?
I HAD SOME TIME TO KILL SO...I THOUGHT I'D GO OUT PARTYING
DID YOU JUST COME HERE TO PLAY DRESS-UP?!
IT'S TIME FOR A LITTLE MIDNIGHT COUNSEL-ING.
Himiko-san lent me these undercover disguises
I LIVE ALONE ANYWAY, SO WHY WOULD I WANT TO GO BACK HOME?
HOME? WHAT FOR?
WRONG AGAIN.
DID YOU THINK OF RETURNING HOME?

"WE'VE TRIED TO CONTACT HIS PARENTS AGAIN AND AGAIN, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YUUKI-KUN LIVES ALONE."
HAS SAYA-CHAN TALKED TO YOU?
NO, BUT I... OVERHEARD SOME-THING...
.....
"HE'S SAYS HE'S AN ORPHAN SO THERE'S NO POINT IN TRYING."
SO HE'S LOST HIS PARENTS, TOO? WE'RE THE SAME, THEN.
THEY DID A LOTTA RESEARCH ON ME FOR THIS LEGAL CASE.
THOUGH ONLY ABOUT THE CASE AND MY FAMILY.
THEY SAY I WAS THE VICTIM AND ACTING OUT OF SELF-DEFENSE...
THANKS TO SAYA-CHAN.

EVEN THOUGH, YOU KNOW, I AM AN ASSASSIN.
WHY DO YOU KEEP SAYING THAT?
FROM THE FIRST TIME WE MET...
...IF YOU'D WANTED TO HIDE THE FACT YOU WERE AN ASSASSIN FROM ME, YOU COULD HAVE...
...INSTEAD OF BLURTING IT OUT ALL THE TIME.
IT'S LIKE HE WANTS ME TO HATE HIM.
YOU KEEP CALLING YOURSELF THE ENEMY.
WELL, THE JOKE IS GETTING OLD...
...SO QUIT CALLING YOURSELF AN ASSASSIN.

BECAUSE I'M RIGHT, AREN'T I?
...YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO PISS ME OFF, MEMORI...
THIS PERSOHA OF YOURS IS OBVIOUSLY A CRY FOR HELP, SO I WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S MADE YOU THAT WAY.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! I DON'T--
THEN WHY DID YOU PROTECT ME?!
NO! I CHOSE TO BE AN ASSASSIN BECAUSE I WANTED TO!
.....!
THEN, WHO WAS IT FOR?!
I DIDN'T JUMP IN THE WAY TO PROTECT YOU!

Angel of Doom
SHUT UP! THE BOTH OF YOU!!
WAIT A SEC...
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT TIME IT IS?! YOU'RE WAKING THE OTHER PATIENTS!
I'M SO DREADFULLY SORRY FOR THE RACKET, MY DEAR.
YOU SEE, I'M A GOOD FRIEND OF THE PATIENT'S ...
...SO, IF YOU DON'T MIND, MIGHT I STAY JUST A LITTLE LONGER?
AREN'T YOU WITH INTERNAL MEDICINE?
OH! Y-YES! I AM!
Thats odd I could've sworn Yuuki san was here for surgery
Gasp! A hunky doctor with glasses!

Y-YUUKI?!
WHAT?!
IF YOU WANT SOMEONE TO TALK TO, WHY DON'T YOU COME TO THE NURSE'S LOUNGE WITH ME? ♡♡
Already Gone
HUH?!
I DO MIND, DOCTOR!
Yuuki! Where did you gooooooooo?!
Whoa whoa! Hold on a minute!
Right this way! You and I can get some alone time! ♥
SHUT UP!
SHUT UP!
SHUT UP!!
"IT'S OBVIOUSLY A CRY FOR HELP."
I DON'T NEED YOU..

...SEEING THROUGH MY LIES.
Huff! Huff!
PHEW! FINALLY GOT AWAY FROM...
...THE CRAZY NURSE!
I'VE LOOKED EVERYWHERE... YUUKI MUST BE LONG GONE BY NOW.
IF HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY FAMILY...
WHERE ON EARTH COULD HE HAVE GONE?

HE WAS THE ONE MESSING WITH MY HEAD!
WHY CAN'T HE JUST TELL ME THE TRUTH?!
THE MORE IT'S HIDDEN, THE MORE I WANT TO KNOW!
"YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO PISS ME OFF, MEMORI..."
SO THAT WAS A LIE TOO? I HATE BEING DUPED.
"MY MOM ALWAYS COOKS FOR ME!"
...FREE FROM A LIFE OF MURDER.
I'M SERIOUSLY ABOUT TO BLOW A FUSE HERE.
I CAN'T STAND NOT KNOWING!
MAYBE IF HE TOLD ME...
...SOMEDAY HE'D BE...

HEY, YUU--
BUT... WHAT'S HE DOING?
OH! THERE HE IS!
I'M ALL RIGHT, YUKI-SAN.
HE'S ON THE PHONE WITH SOMEONE!
PLEASE, DON'T WORRY. I'M DOING FINE.
BUT WHO COULD HE BE TALKING TO? <THEN AGAIN, IT'S NOT LIKE I KNOW HIS FRIENDS...IT COULD BE ANYONE...
SORRY AGAIN FOR NOT CALLING YOU SOONER.
TRUST ME, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET BACK HOME TO YOU.
AND MY NATURAL SLEUTHING SKILLS TELL ME.. IT'S A WOMAN!
IS SHE THE REASON HE'S BEEN SO DESPERATE TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL?
HE'S GRINNING EAR TO EAR.
THAT'S UNEXPECTED.

I GUESS HE DOES HAVE SOMEONE HE CARES ABOUT.
YO.

Ossksny?
IT FEELS SO GOOD, I MIGHT JUST FALL ASLEEP RIGHT HERE.
NOTHIN'. ENJOYING THE EVENING BREEZE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
NOTHING.
I'M JUST TIRED OF DEALING WITH SOMEONE WHO WON'T LISTEN TO ME.
WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL?
AND I'M A HEAVY SLEEPER, YOU KNOW, SO I PROBABLY WOULDN'T EVEN NOTICE IF A LITTLE RAT SLIPPED IN... OR OUT.

I MAY NOT COME BACK. YOU KNOW...
BUT I'LL BE RARING TO GO AGAIN, STARTING TOMORROW MORNING.
WHAT ARE YOU, AN IDIOT?
THEN I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO COME LOOKING.

YOU WANT TO GO, DON'T YOU?
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT?
BECAUSE WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS STUPID.
SWEET DREAMS, YUUKI.
I'M GOING TO SLEEP.
AND I CAN'T STOP YOU... NOT TONIGHT
Nyum nyum
AND USE THE BEDSHEETS TO CLIMB DOWN THIS TIME... YOU DON'T WANT TO RIP OPEN YOUR STITCHES AGAIN, DO YOU? ZZZ...
SHUT UP AND SLEEP!
Nnn...
.....
Hm
Jeez

WHAT IS IT NOW?!
わたわた
GYAAAAAAAAH!
OH, AND ONE MORE THING...
カタ
THANKS ...
...FOR PROTECTING ME THE OTHER DAY.
...YOU STILL SAVED MY LIFE.
EITHER WAY...
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME THE FIRST TIME?! I WASN'T TRYING TO PROTECT YOU!

AND I'M GRATEFUL FOR THAT.
WHATEVER. PISS OFF, YOU JERK!
DON'T FORGET MY PRESENT!

DON'T COUNT ON IT!
Heh heh heh...
I WONDER WHERE HE'S HEADED...
I CAN'T SAY I DON'T CARE
BUT I HOPE THAT SOMEDAY...
...WE'LL FINALLY BE ABLE TO TALK... MAYBE...
OH, WELL.
GUESS ALL I CAN DO NOW IS WAIT.

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GAME 8

YUUKI-KUN!
CONGRATU-LATIONS...
...ON YOUR RECOVERY!

YOU'VE REALLY DONE SO MUCH FOR MY STUPID LITTLE BROTHER.
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU JUMPED OUT IN FRONT OF MEMORI-KUN TO SAVE HIS LIFE!
Long time no see!
WE GOT YOU A PRESENT!
His name's Mikerun. I hope you like him!
SWEET! I LOVE IT!
I collect stuffed animals!
WHAT A WONDERFUL AND BRAVE LITTLE BOY!
HA HA HA! SHUCKS, IT WAS NOTHING. BUT THANKS, I GUESS!
IS IT TRUE YOU FOUGHT HAND-TO-HAND WITH THE GUY EVEN AFTER YOU WERE INJURED?
That's frankin' awesome!
WHAT WONDERFUL MEMORIES! LET'S NOT FORGET THE TIME YOU TIED ME TO THE BED!
HE'S HEALTHY ENOUGH TO KICK AND SPRAY ANYONE IN THE FACE NOW...I BET HE COULD EVEN HANDLE A PUNCH IN THE GUT!
Ha ha ha!
MEMORI-CHAN TOOK SUCH GOOD CARE OF ME WHILE I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL...
NO KIDDING.

...BUT WHEN I'VE STOPPED TO THINK ABOUT IT...
...IF IT WAS REALLY WAS A GIRLFRIEND, SHE'D HAVE COME TO VISIT HIM!
I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME HE TOLD ME WHERE HE WENT.
HMPH, NOT TO MENTION THE NIGHT HE SNEAKED OFF...
WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THIS?!
Hold it, hold it!!
BOOGY-MAN?
OH GOODNESS, AND HE'D COME RUNNING TO ME IN TEARS YELLING, "HELP ME, HIMIKO-SAN! THE BOOGYMAN IS AFTER ME!"
It was simply adorable.
SPEAKING OF INJURIES, MEMORI WAS A TOTALLY CLUMSY KID...HE USED TO GET HURT ALL THE TIME.
During his bodyguard training
THAT WAS JUST PLAIN CRUEL! BROTHERS DON'T DO THAT TO EACH OTHER!
Garden scythe
...AND CHASE HIM AROUND THE HOUSE SAYING I WAS GOING TO STEAL HIS SOUL!
I SUP-POSE THE BOOGYMAN WAS THERE WHEN I'D DRESS UP AS THE GRIM REAPER...
Heh heh heh
Memori Age 9
Ken Age 19 (supposedly an adult)

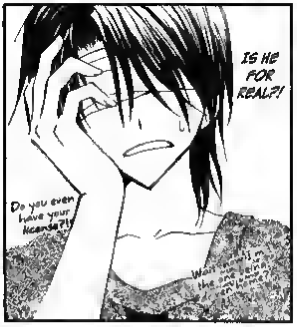
WHATEVER! WE'RE NOT EVEN REALLY RELATED BY BLOOD!
We look nothing alike!
Gah ha ha!
Directly through the heart!
ME-MORI...
...DRIVE YUUKI HOME, WOULD YOU?
WHERE DO YOU LIVE, YUUKI-KUN?
THAT'S A SECRET!
YOU SURE WERE LOVED AS A KID, MEMORI-CHAN.
AS IF! MORE LIKE MANIPU-LATED!
AND KEN NEVER HAS A PROBLEM REMINDING ME I WAS ADOPTED.
EH, BUT YOU CAN SHRUG IT OFF LIKE IT'S NOTHING.
'CUZ I KNOW THAT'S JUST HOW KEN IS.
IT'D BE STUPID FOR ME TO TAKE IT SERI-OUSLY.
SO THAT'S WHAT TRUST IS, HUH?
HEH. .YOU AND I REALLY ARE NOTHING ALIKE.
HUH?

I WONDER IF I'D HAVE TURNED OUT THE SAME WAY IF THE FUJIEDAS HAD TAKEN ME IN.
ABLE TO WALK AROUND WITHOUT SCARS THAT WILL NEVER HEAL.
.....
NORMALLY I'D REFUSE, OF COURSE, BUT I'D REALLY LIKE THE CHANCE TO SEE HIS HOME LIFE.
KEN ORDERED ME TO DRIVE YOU NOME!
WELL, IT'S TIME I GOT GOING!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYI--?
NOT SO FAST, BUDDY!

At my wonderful workplace... I have two assistants who help with the backgrounds. They apparently had a tough time doing the backgrounds for this chapter and the last. Sorry, guys ^^; Lately, my younger sister has been doing the backgrounds too so it's been a real help. Personally, I like to draw backgrounds, too! Especially old mansions and big trees... ruins and castles ♥

But when it comes to office buildings, round objects (like plates,) and anything that requires using your brain (including perspective), I have trouble. Actually, it's just a real pain in the butt (ew!). I swear my plates and bottles look something a three-year-old would draw!! Seriously. I'm also pretty bad at cutting out pieces of tone. But I guess you can still make a good manga if you're bad at it. I just want to draw lines that still look pretty without tone. So I leave the tone work to my assistants... Thanks so much, guys!!

(I used to be a manga's assistant myself long ago. I actually got hired quite a lot.)



I NEVER THOUGHT HE'D AGREE SO EASILY!
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF LIFE HE LIVES?
HE TOLD US HE LIVES ALONE ...
DOES HE STAY IN SOME DINGY BASEMENT APARTMENT?
OR DOES HE SURVIVE OUT OF SOME ABANDONED WAREHOUSE?
MAYBE HE'S A MEMBER OF A CRIME SYNDICATE!
Eep! I'm scared!
SO, IS YOUR PLACE FAR FROM HE--
OKAY, WE'RE HERE. TAKE OFF YOUR BLINDFOLD AND OPEN YOUR EYES.
G-G-GOOD.
NOW THAT I'VE COME THIS FAR, THERE'S NO WAY I'M TURNING BACK!
Gyaaah!
Stop!!
I'm gonna die!
FROM ZERO TO 60 IN TWO SECONDS?!
Slow down!
Ha ha ha! No one's gonna pass me!

BA-DUM
OMPH!
THE HELL WAS THAT FOR?!
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT DRIVING TO A RESORT?!

WHAT IS HE, A CELEBRITY?!
Wa ha
ha ha
ha! ha
Commoner (and just plain poor)
IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK, SHOUKO-SAN.
WELCOME HOME, SIR!
YEAH. THIS IS MY HOUSE.
O10...YOU JUST SAY "GOOD TO BE BACK"?
ガラレヤーン
THAT'S IT! LIFE IS OFFICIALLY NOT FAIR!
SOME NICE OLD MAN BESTOWED ALL THIS WEALTH UPON ME, YOU SEE! ♡
Why does this dirty liar get the happy ending?!
B-B-BUT YOU SAID YOU WERE AN ORPHAN AND THAT YOU LIVED ALONE!
WHAT IS THIS? SOME SORT OF SICK JOKE?!
OH, THAT?

GRR! WELL, I GOT WHAT I WANTED, BUT IT ISN'T WHAT I HAD IN MIND!
Proud
SEEING AS YOU'RE ALREADY HERE, WHY DON'T YOU COME IN?
KEN?! HIMIKO-SAN?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
WE WANTED TO SEE WHAT HIS PLACE LOOKED LIKE, TOO!
HOW MARVELOUS! IT'S LIKE IT'S RIGHT OUT OF A FAIRYTALE!
I'm in love!
IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A LOT OF EXPENSIVE STUFF EVERYWHERE.
Some call her the Racing Queen
SIGH... HIMIKO-SAN IS CRAZY BEHIND THE WHEEL...
YUP, BUT I DIDN'T DRIVE.
I was napping
Y-YOU MEAN YOU FOLLOWED US HERE?
YUUKI-KUN, YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD DRIVER! I ALMOST LOST YOU A FEW TIMES!

WOOOW!♡
THIS IS INCRE-DIBLE!
You're coming home with me! vvv
Omigod the maids are sooooo cute! vv
What's this? Hmm. I think I'll take it home
It's melting my commoner's eyes!
IT'S ALL SO BRILLIANT!
These two do whatever they want
"I WONDER IF I'D HAVE TURNED OUT THAT WAY IF THE FUJIEDAS HAD TAKEN ME IN."
"IT NEARLY EVERYTHING HE SAYS IS A LIE!
COULD HE JUST BE TRYING TO FOOL ME AGAIN?!
Nyah, really! You fell for it!
HOW CAN HE BE AN ASSASSIN WHEN HE LIVES THIS WAY?
IS THIS A DREAM?
OR IS THE PART ABOUT HIM BEING AN ASSASSIN A DREAM?

THAT SLIMY LYING BASTARD...
I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE HIM, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE!
WHENEVER I ASK HIM DIRECTLY, HE WAVES IT OFF AND SAYS HE'S AN ASSASSIN.
Dog lover
Ooh! Look at the big doggie!
Wait, Kan! No!
BUT WOULDN'T BEING AN ASSASSIN BE SOMEONE'S BIGGEST SECRET?
Don't ride him or you'll break him!
Go, Rover, go!
And his name's not Rover!
MEANING...THAT HE HAS AN EVEN GREATER SECRET HE'S KEEPING...
AND IT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ME.
I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!
...YOU WERE RAISED BY...
GOD'S FOR US THE SWITCHING...
I WASN'T TRYING TO PROTECT YOU!

"I'M ALL RIGHT, YUKI-SAN."
"PLEASE DON'T WORRY. I'M DOING FINE."
WHAT?
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT COULD IT BE?
WHO'S YOUR GIRL-FRIEND?!
WAS THE WOMAN HE WAS TALKING TO JUST A GIRLFRIEND?
DOES SHE KNOW WHO YUUKI TRULY IS? DOES SHE KNOW HIS SECRETS?
YUUKI!
THAT'S N
I CAN'T
TAKE IT
ANYMOR

What the--?
WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU ASK SOME-THING LIKE THAT?!
DON'T LOOK AT ME!!
SOME-ONE LIKE HIMIKO-SAN WOULD ^^ DO.
I CAN AT LEAST TELL YOU MY TYPE.
WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
NO, NEVER MIND.
It was stupid
S-SORRY, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
What did I mean?
WHY ARE YOU SUDDENLY INTERESTED IN MY LOVE LIFE?!
That's not usually something we talk about
WELL, YOU SEE...
AND WHY NOT?
Another mystery to be solved
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.

GOOD GOD, WOMAN! CONSIDER YOUR AGE!
PFFFF...
28 y.o.
KEN-KUN! LOOK AT ME!
I BORROWED ONE OF THE MAID'S OUTFITS!
I DON'T EVEN WANT AN OLDER WOMAN!
YOU JERK! YOU'RE OLDER THAN ME!
Memori-chan?
I BELONG TO NO ONE, UNDERSTAND?!
Has good hearing
Gyaa...
BECAUSE SHE ALREADY BELONGS TO KEN.
HMM, I SEE.
Never knew

KEN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! SHE'S RIGHT!
NO, SHE'S NOT! MORON!
GOOD, YOU'RE ALIVE
Why don't you get a real job?!
You're gonna get it, brat!
HEH

What's up with this room? It's like a treasure trove!
I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW QUICKLY TIME PASSED...I'M GLAD WE'RE NOT DRIVING HOME TONIGHT...
I'LL HAVE TO ASK HIM TOMORROW.
GUESS THERE'S NO POINT IN ARGUING WITH MYSELF.
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE HE ACTUALLY LIVES IN THIS PLACE
WHO'S THERE?!
SOMEBODY'S...
...COMING CLOSER...
HUH? AM I...HEARING THINGS?
Ooh, this feels so good! Do all rich people live this way?!

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE WE PLAYED A GAME, MEMORI-CHAN.
I'M SORRY. WERE YOU SLEEPING?
ARE YOU UP FOR IT?
YUUKI...?!
HUH?

THIS CAN'T BE REAL!
OR DID YOU REALLY THINK NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN? THAT EVERYTHING WOULD BE FINE?
YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHY I BECAME AN ASSASSIN EVEN THOUGH I LIVE IN SUCH A NICE PLACE...
THAT'S STRANGE. THIS IS AN ASSASSIN'S HOUSE, AFTER ALL...
DIDN'T YOU ASSUME THIS WAS A POSSIBILITY?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THIS HAS TO BE ANOTHER ONE OF HIS LIES.
SOME CONCRTS OF MINE ARE ALSO HERE.
...IT'S BECAUSE I DO.
I DON'T KILL BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE MONEY...
HE'S JUST PLAYING AROUND! HE MUST BE!
BUT I CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR YOUR FRIENDS WHO'VE TAGGED ALONG.
NO, I HAD NO PLANS OF KILLING YOU.
IS THIS WHY YOU BROUGHT ME HERE?

KYAAAAAH!
AAAAH!
YOU CAN'T MEAN ...
SO LET'S PLAY A LITTLE GAME.
SAVE YOUR FRIENDS ...
...OR FIGHT WITH ME?
THEY'D NEVER GO DOWN SO EASILY--
IT'S BECAUSE THEY'VE PROTECTED YOU ALL THIS TIME.
THAT'S WHAT PISSES ME OFF.
TO SEE YOU SMILING, SO LOVED AND PROTECTED ...
UH-OH. I TOLD THEM TO WAIT A LITTLE WHILE...
...BUT I GUESS THEY FINISHED THEM OFF WITHOUT ME.

KEN! HIMIKO-SAN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! IT CAN'T...
IT JUST CAN'T!
KEN!!
KEN! HIMIKO-SAN!
Isn't it luxurious?
OH, MEMORI-KUN, LOOK! MY BED HAS A CANOPY!

Eek!
E but sir I thought you were married...
YOU BASTARD! WHY'D YOU PUT ME IN THE SAME ROOM AS HER?!!
KEN GAVE ME QUITE A SCARE WHEN HE SUDDENLY JUMPED INTO MY BED.
Not funny
Not informed
One more word and you're dead!
OOPS, DID WE WAKE YOU?
UM... BUT I JUST HEARD YOU TWO... SCREAM?
WAIT... DOES THIS MEAN... I WAS... DUPED?
I am an idiot
ぷしゅうう
AND GREAT JOB ON THE SCREAMS! I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR BETTER TIMING!
Bwa ha ha ha!
OH, MAN. YOU'RE SO NAÏVE!
HUH?
YUUKI!...

WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?!
WHA...?
YOU HAVE NO FREAKIN' IDEA NOW SCARED I WAS!
IT WAS WORSE THAN ANY THREAT YOU'VE DISNED OUT!
AND HURT MORE THAN ANY PUNCH OR KICK YOU'VE THROWN!

GIVE IT A REST.
I CAN HANDLE YOUR STUPID ASSASSIN GAMES...
...BUT IF YOU EVER HURT THE ONES I LOVE...
...YOU WILL PAY.
SO DON'T YOU EVER DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS AGAIN!

I NEVER PLANNED ON HURTING THEM...
I'M...I'M SORRY.
"YOU AND I AREN'T THAT DIFFERENT AFTER ALL."
HIS VOICE WAS SO GENTLE...
I'M REALLY SORRY.
...I WAS SUDDENLY AT A LOSS FOR WORDS.

DAMMIT. DID I FALL ASLEEP ANGRY AFTER THAT?
"IT PISSES ME OFF TO SEE YOU SMILING, SO LOVED AND PROTECTED."
sigh
I GUESS THAT FART WAS SERIOUS.
Grrr!
WHY'S HE GOT SUCH A GRUDGE AGAINST ME?
BUT, DAMMIT, I'VE GOT A BONE TO PICK WITH HIM, TOO!
UGYAAAH!
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO BE WITH THAT FACE, A TROLL?
"BECAUSE I ALSO HAVE SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT."

Whaaa

I WONDER WHERE HE WENT OFF TO...
I'M HOME.
HE WAS LYING THROUGH HIS TEETH!
NO. THE PROBLEM ISN'T THE HOUSE. IT'S HIM!
GUUK!
WELL, HE'S NOT GETTING AWAY THAT EASILY!
HE'S ALREADY LEFT.
WHAT?!

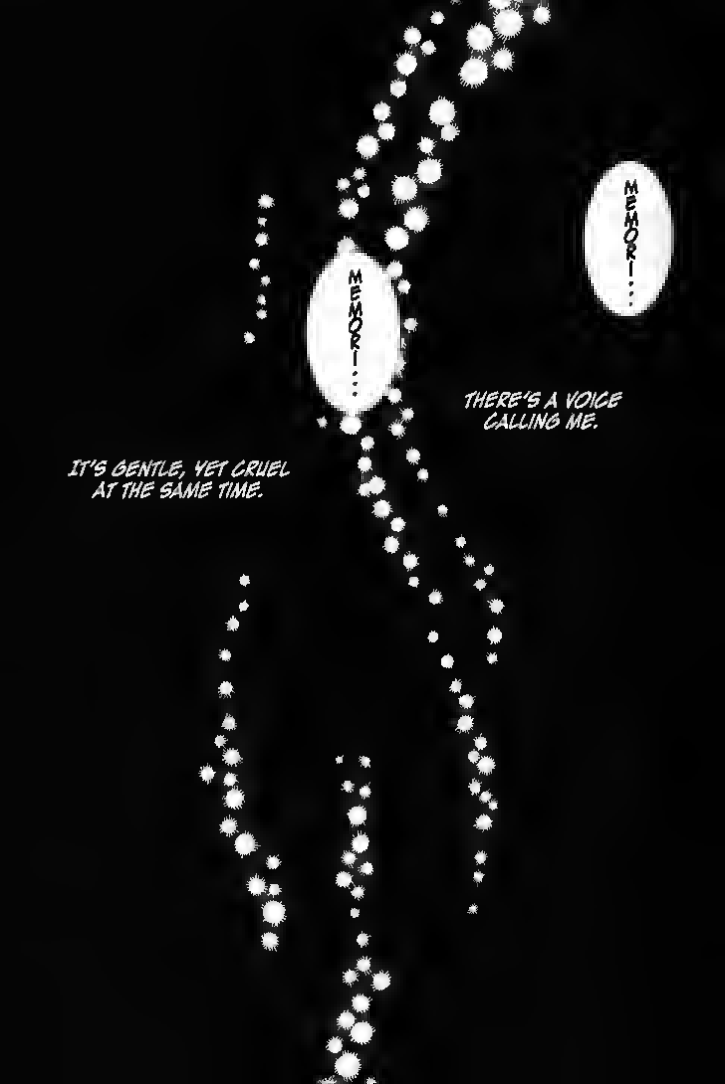
YUKI-SAN...
...SORRY I'M LATE.
PLEASE, DON'T MAKE ME SAY IT AGAIN.
IT'S "MOM," NOT "YUKI-SAN."
RIGHT. ALMOST FORGOT.

IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU HOME...
...MY LITTLE MEMORI.

GAME 8 / OVER

I wish I didn't have such a bully for an older brother!
Listen to what your brother tells you, runt!
What if Ken
NOOGIE NOOGIE
What an intimidating sister
Then how about an older sister?
were a girl?
Kenko-san, age 29 Well-endowed
Poor little brother
Please put some clothes on
At least around the house
Nothin' like a cold one after a nice warm bath
Looks like I got here just in time for the show
I see no problem.
Whoa, wait up!
You can't do that!
What do you want, Himiko?
Lovey Dovey!
Oh, Kenko-chan!

game rush
GAME. 9


MEMORI...
MEMORI...
THERE'S A VOICE CALLING ME.
IT'S GENTLE, YET CRUEL AT THE SAME TIME.

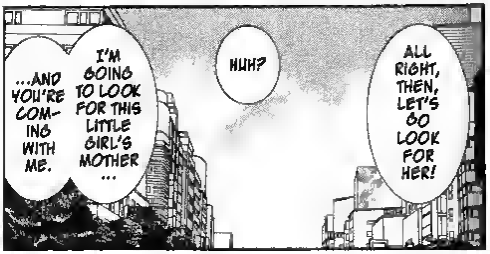
MEMORI, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
NO, I'M WRONG ...
DON'T WORRY, YUKI-SAN. I'M JUST GOING OUT FOR A BIT.
MEMORI, HONEY, PLEASE CALL ME "MOM."
BUT WHEN...
IT'S NOT CALLING FOR ME AT ALL.
...WILL I HAVE MY TURN?
HEY, YUUKI!
YOU DIRTY LIAR!
WHAT'S WITH THE DISAPPEAR-ING ACT?

DID I THINK SOMETHING WOULD CHANGE?
NAH, THAT'S STUPID.
I might be a real stalker Uh-oh
OOPS, I WALKED HERE WITHOUT THINKING.
WHY DID I COME HERE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, MEMORI-CHAN?
THIS IS OUR OFFICE! I HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE HERE.
No, moron!
Gya ha ha!
YOU SHOULD'VE FIGURED THAT OUT SOONER!
THAT WAS SAYAKO'S HOUSE!
Lamebrain!
BET YOU WERE SURPRISED TO SEE I'M LOADED, HA HA!
Heh heh!♥
AAANYWAY, I STOPPED BY YOUR PLACE THE OTHER DAY...
YOU'RE A STRANGE GUY.
Look who's talking
YES, I'M MAD.
BUT I'M OVER IT NOW.
...USING KEN AND HIMIKO AS BAIT?
ARE YOU STILL MAD ABOUT ME...

Big brother
How?!
FOR BEING ADOPTED, YOU TAKE AN AWFUL LOT AFTER YOUR BROTHER.
... ABOUT YOU.
... SO I'M GONNA DO THE SAME...
YOU ALWAYS TALK VERY DIRECTLY WITH ME...
Short tempered: zealous and direct
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT I'M AN ASSASSIN?
..SO WHY NOW? WHY ME?
YOU USED TO HAVE A HANDS-OFF POLICY FOR EVERYONE...
NO. I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
.....
I DON'T GET IT AT ALL.
HUH?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S TRUE AND WHAT'S A LIE WITH YOU ANYMORE.
IF YOU'RE REALLY AN ASSASSIN, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ONE?
WHO PUT YOU UP TO IT?
H-HOW LONG?
YOU MEAN... YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME?
IN THAT CASE...
WHAT GIVES?
...HOW ABOUT I KILL YOU AND PROVE IT?

HUH?
WAAAAAAAAH!
Waaaah
W-WHAT'S WRONG, LITTLE GIRL?
MY M-M-M-M--
M-M-M?
SHE MEANS "MOMMY"
Duh
SHE'S G-G-GO...
G-G-GO?
SHE'S GONE!
Jeez...
Waaaah!
Are you lost?



Turning up the charm
WE'RE YOUR BODY-GUARDS!
FROM THIS MOMENT ON, WE'LL RISK OUR LIVES TO PROTECT YOU.
HEY, YOU'RE THE ONLY BODY-GUARD HERE!
And that smile is totally fake!
BUT YOU'RE GOOD AT HANDLING KIDS!
I THOUGHT YOU LIKED THEM.

In the previous chapter, Ken tells Himiko that she should "consider her age" when she tries on a maid's outfit. This sort of jeering is just Ken's way of teasing Himiko san because he cares for her deeply. And I don't think there's anything wrong with a 28-year-old maid. In fact this writer really likes it! It was a lot of fun drawing a 28-year-old (Ha ha!). I mean, Himiko san as a maid. I just wanted to draw something Gothic and Lolita inspired. A lot of Gothic and Lolita related magazines have been coming out and I enjoy flipping through them. There are some really cute outfits but I don't think they'd look good on me. I really only wear simple and easy-to-move-in clothes. And because my work requires me to stay in the house most of the time, I don't get a lot of opportunities to dress up.

I know. I know that's not fun. It's not that I don't like cute clothes. My mind is just stuffed with manga.

KINDA, BUT...
BUT...
...I CAN'T HANDLE...
...SEEING THEM CRY.
IT BRINGS ME BACK...
...TO A TIME WHEN I WAS ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD.
I WAS ABANDONED BY MY PARENTS AND PUT INTO FOSTER CARE. ONE NIGHT, I RAN AWAY FROM THERE...
...AND WENT SPRINTING BLINDLY INTO THE STREET.
JUST AS A CAR WAS ABOUT TO HIT ME, A WOMAN RAN UP AND PUSHED ME OUT OF THE WAY.

W-WHY DID YOU PROTECT ME?
THAT WAS A STUPID THING TO DO...
THERE'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU!
NO ONE WOULD CARE IF I DIED...
...AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU.
.....
I'M JUST GLAD...
...THAT YOU'RE ALIVE.
THANK GOODNESS I WAS ABLE TO PROTECT YOU.

YOU'RE A R-REAL STRANGE LADY.
UNTIL THAT MOMENT, I HAD NEVER KNOWN...
...HOW PRECIOUS TEARS WERE.
I LEARNED THAT HER NAME WAS MIYUKI ASAKA.
AND AFTER THE ACCIDENT, SHE ADOPTED ME.
HUH?
MEMORI?
YUP. THAT'S YOUR NAME.
BUT IT'S "SHIN."
NO. I'M QUITE SURE IT'S NOT.
I FELT SO PROUD TO BE GIVEN...
..THAT NAME.
OKAY, THEN, MEMORI IT IS!
THANKS!

I LOVED HER.
I WAS STILL YOUNG AND HAPPY AT THE TIME.
MEMORI, DEAR?
PLEASE CALL ME "MOM."
LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT MY LITTLE WORLD WAS FALLING APART...
BUT...
SQUEEK!
YUKI-SAN, WHAT HAPPENED?!
Y-YOUR HANDS.. THEY'RE ALL BLOODY!
AND THAT POOR BIRD...!
IT... JUST WOULDN'T... STOP CHIRPING.
AT LAST! THE VILLAIN SHOWS HIS FACE!
?!

TALLY-HO!
WHAT IN THE ...?!
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING?!
OOPS. SORRY.
I'M TRAINING TO BE A BODY-GUARD!
WHOA!
HE LOOKS JUST LIKE YUKI-SAN!
Hey, what are you staring at?

YUP! THAT'S WHAT I'M GONNA BE WHEN I GROW UP!
AND IT'LL BE MY JOB TO SAVE PEOPLE IN NEED!
A BODY-GUARD, HUN?
COOL! IT'S LIKE A LITTLE VERSION OF HER!
I'VE GOT AN IDEA!
WHOA!
THAT'S WHY... TODAY'S MISSION IS TO PROTECT DOLLAR FROM EVIL!
Dollar as in money? And where's the evil?
Huff! Huff!
Dollar is the Fujieda family dog Ken named him
BUT SAVING A DOG JUST ISN'T THE SAME...
Who are you fighting anyway?
はーーん
THIS IS PERFECT!
UM... WAIT...
I DON'T WANNA ASK BUT ...
...WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?

OMIGOO! HE EVEN HAS YUKI-SAN'S SMILE!
DON'T FRET. I WILL RISK MY LIFE TO PROTECT YOU.
Isn't this really life threatening?
DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND? THE EVIL IS AFTER YOU!
We must protect the flame!
WHERE?! AND WHY IS IT AFTER ME?!
This isn't what real body guards do is it?
WHAAAAAT?!
JUMP FROM HERE, OF COURSE!
I'M STILL NOT TOO SURE ABOUT THIS..
TOO LATE!
I wasn't finished talking!
Probably a poor decision
PRINCESS! THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE SAFE!
And where you callin' "princess"?
THIS IS NOT WHAT I WOULD CALL "SAFE"!

IT WAS REALLY FUN!
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE ACTUALLY PLAYED WITH SOMEONE ELSE MY AGE!
THIS IS SO WEIRD!
I'm always surrounded by grown ups
Hmph! YOU'RE CUTE SO I'LL FORGIVE YOU.
Oops
SORRY.
?
Tee hee!
HUH?
Y-YOU THINK IT WAS FUN? WITH ME?
AND IT REALLY WORKED WELL WITH MY BODY-GUARD TRAINING.
YUP
BY THE WAY, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
IT MAKES ME HAPPY, BECAUSE I RARELY PLAY WITH KIDS MY AGE, EITHER.
COME BY AGAIN TOMORROW!
NO ONE'S EVER SAID ANYTHING LIKE THAT TO ME BEFORE.
S-SURE THING!

COMING!
MEMORI!!! GET YOUR BUTT UP HERE!
I'M MEM--
BUT IT'S NOT A VERY COMMON NAME AT ALL.
COULD IT BE A COINCIDENCE?
NO...
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...
PLUS, HE LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE HER.
DINNER IS READY!
HE HAS THE SAME NAME AS ME?
WHAT...?

"...MEMORI."
"PLEASE CALL ME 'MOM'..."

THIS...THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT...
I MUST BE CRAZY.
BUT...MY PARENTS USED TO BEAT ME ...
...BECAUSE I ASKED TOO MANY QUES-TIONS.
THEN, SOMEONE KIND TOOK ME INTO HER HOME.
THE ONE YUKI-SAN WAS ALWAYS CALLING...
COULD IT BE SUCH HUGE A COINCI-DENCE?
HEY...
WHO GAVE YOU THAT NAME? "MEMORI."
THE ONE SHE WAS ALWAYS CALL-ING...
.....
MY BIRTH MOTHER.
...WASN'T ME.
AND WHERE IS SHE... NOW?
IT WASN'T ME.
.....

"I'M JUST GLAD THAT YOU'RE ALIVE."
IT WAS NEVER ME TO BEGIN WITH...
BUT THEN...
I HAVE TO GO NOW THAT I'VE FOUND HIM!
HEY! QUIT PULLING ME!
...WHAT ABOUT ME?
KNOCK IT OFF!
YUKI-SAN'S WAITING FOR MEMORI TO COME HOME!
I HAVE TO GO!
IF MEMORI COMES HOME...
...DOES THAT MEAN SHE WON'T NEED ME ANYMORE?!

...USED TO THIS BY NOW.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT'S FUNNY. I SHOULD BE...
HEY! LISTEN TO ME!
I BET SHE WON'T NEED ME. I'LL BE NOTHING TO HER!
LET GO...
HUH?
I CAN HARDLY BREATHE.
I'M TAKING YOU TO WHERE YOUR MOMMY IS!
YA!
LET GO OF ME RIGHT NOW!
SHE'S NOT HERE ANY-MORE!
SHE'S NOT HERE!

I'M HOME.
SHE'S CLOSE BY...
YUKI-SAN IS RIGHT HERE...
WHAT'S HE MEAN?
NOT HERE?
WELCOME HOME, MEMORI.
...WAITING FOR MEMORI ALL THIS TIME.

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?

UGH... NNGH...
HE SAID HE WAS LOOKING FOR A BOY NAMED "SHIN YUUKI" WHO ESCAPED FROM FOSTER CARE.
WHAT...
...IS GOING ON HERE?
BUT I TOLD HIM THAT THERE WAS NO ONE HERE BY THAT NAME.
WHAT ...?
SORRY, DEAR. THIS MAN WAS MAKING SUCH A FUSS!
HMPH.. JUST NEVER SHUTS UP.
HE'S STILL CHIRPING.
NO!!
YUKI-SAN, NO.
DON'T DO IT.
THEN... HOW ABOUT YOU KILL HIM, MEMORI?

SO I'LL FALL INTO...
STAY WITH ME FOREVER
...THE DARKNESS.
AND IF I BECOME THE MEMORI YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED...
I'LL BE...
MY SWEET AND PRECIOUS CHILD...
I COULD NEVER LIVE WITHOUT YOU.
I'M NOT MEMORI.
MEMORI'S SOMEWHERE ELSE.
HE TOLD ME TO COME AGAIN TOMORROW... NE WAS SMILING SO MUCH...
SO HAPPY TO HAVE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT YOU.
I'M SURE NE'LL FORGET ABOUT ME BY TOMORROW, TOO.
MY PRECIOUS MEMORI...

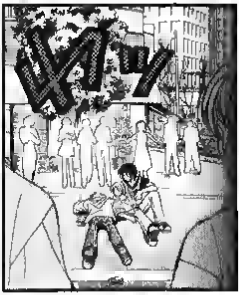
HMPH, THIS DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.
I THOUGHT WE'D FIND HER IN NO TIME.
IS THIS WHERE YOU LAST SAW HER?
.....
WE'VE WALKED SO MUCH TODAY, NOW WE'RE LOST!
WILL YOU TELL ME...YOU LOVE ME?
DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE? YOUR PHONE NUMBER? MAYBE A CELL NUMBER?
Babble Babble Babble
...GULP!
Dude, she doesn't know!
YOU CAN'T ASK HER ALL THAT AT ONCE! You're scaring her!
.....
WHAT?
NOTHING.

MOMMY?
OH!
MOMMY!!
SCREEEEECH
HONK HOOOONK!
Eeeeek!
Plunk

Huff
Huff

GREAT, NOW YOU'VE MADE HER CRY!
Waaah!
OOPS.

WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU THINKING, RUNNING INTO THE STREET LIKE THAT?!
Hey kid
YOU ALL RIGHT?


Aw

Siiiiigh...

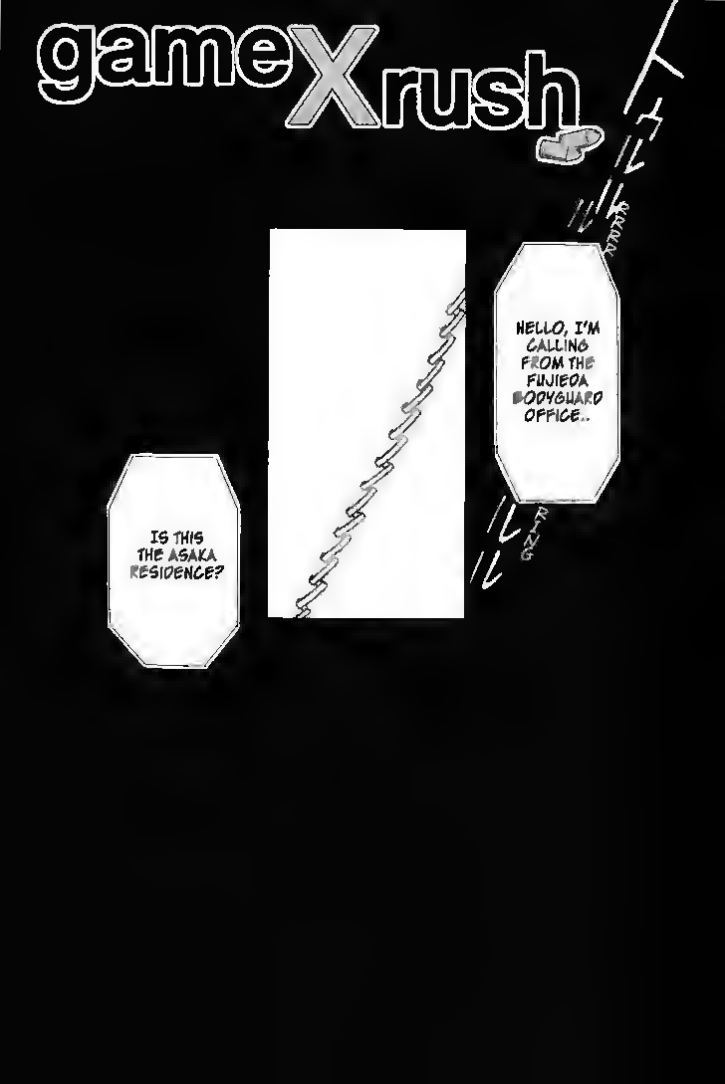
Heh
THIS PROVES IT.
YOU'RE JUST NOT THE TYPE TO KILL SOMEONE.
WHAT?
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF AN ASSASSIN THAT'D RISK HIS LIFE TO SAVE A CHILD.
YOU HONESTLY THINK I'M LYING?
IT JUST DOESN'T SUIT YOU...
AND... I'M GLAD IT DOESN'T.

...OR DESPERATELY WANTED TO KILL YOU....
AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH I'VE ALWAYS HATED YOU...
...I COULDN'T KEEP FROM...
...NOW, AFTER SEEING THIS, I'M RELIEVED.
THERE WAS SOMETHING I WANTED TO SAY BEFORE, BUT...
YOU REALLY DO LOOK LIKE YUKI-SAN.
BUT YOU'RE NOTHING LIKE HER.
OR ME.
AND I'M GLAD YOU'RE THE TYPE WHO PROTECTS PEOPLE.
...ADMIRING YOU.
I'M SUCH AN IDIOT...
...THAT IT TOOK ME THIS LONG TO REALIZE IT.
THAT'S WHY I KEPT TRYING TO TEST YOU.

I GUESS I WANTED YOU TO REALIZE...
...THAT I DIDN'T...
...WANT TO BE A KILLER.
YOU ASKED ME BEFORE HOW LONG I'D BEEN AN ASSASSIN.

THEN, YOU GOT IN THE WAY OF MY WORK.
I ONLY STARTED SAYING I WAS AN ASSASSIN ...
...ON THE DAY...
I WANTED SO BADLY!
I HONESTLY WANTED TO KILL BACK THEN...
...THAT WE FIRST MET.
...YOU STOPPED ME.
BUT...
...TO BURN MY EXISTENCE INTO YOU.
...I HAVE KILLED ONCE BEFORE.
BUT...
NOW, I'M GLAD THAT I NEVER KILLED.
THE ASSASSIN YUUKI NEVER ONCE COMPLETED AN ASSIGNMENT.
THEN, YOU MEAN---

YUUKI ...
I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT IT.
BUT I KNOW IT HAP-PENED
I KILLED.
IN ORDER TO KEEP MYSELF TIED TO HER...
I'M NOT THE GUY YOU THINK I AM.
IN ORDER TO TAKE YOUR PLACE
I TRULY AM...A MURDERER.
GAME 9/OVER


gameXrush
HELLO, I'M CALLING FROM THE FUJIEDA BODYGUARD OFFICE..
RING
IS THIS THE ASAKA RESIDENCE?

gameXrush™

GAME 10

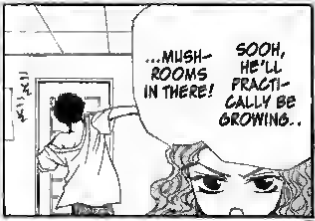
DON'T TELL ME YOU ACTUALLY BELIEVED ME!
I TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT I WAS A KILLER, RIGHT?
HEY, MEMORI-CHAN?
BOY, YOU'RE GULLIBLE.
W-WHAT THE--?
LOOK OUT, MEMORI-CHAN!
GRRR
RRRRRR
DAMN IT! HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO TEASE ME?!
Beep
Beep Beep
GAH!

"I REALLY AM A MURDERER."
BUT WHAT HE TOLD ME...
FOR ONCE, I ACTUALLY WISH THAT WHAT YUUKI HAD TOLD ME WAS A LIE.
...WAS AN HONEST CONFESSION.
SO, IT WAS JUST A DREAM...
FREUD WOULD BE AMUSED.
KEN! SLEEP IN YOUR OWN ROOM!
ACK! A LEG! GET IT OFFA ME!
WAIT A SECOND-...
Beep
Beep
Beep
BUT I ...
A REAL MAN SLEEPS NAKED!
Hey!
YOU MUST BE HOT IN ALL THOSE CLOTHES...
YOUR ROOM'S JUST TOO MESSY TO EVEN STEP FOOT IN!
Stop acting like a bully!
SHADDUP. YOUR BED IS MY BED.

...AND STILL HAVE TO SLEEP IN A ROOM WITH MY NASTY OLDER BROTHER ON A MUGGY SUMMER DAY.
I'd make a terrible shojo manga hero
HOW PATHETIC. I'M 19 YEARS OLD...
JEEZ, BRO, DON'T BE EMBARRASSED IN FRONT OF A DOG!
NO WAY! DOLLAR'S LOOKING!
Dollar is a girl
STARE
ぱーん
GOO-OOOO MORNING! ♡
TOO BAD THE AIR CONDITIONER'S BUSTED.
I'm roasting.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I DIDN'T THINK HE'D SHOW.
MY GOODNESS, IT IS HOT IN HERE!
YUUKI-?!
Gah!
Whoa!
HIMIKO-SAN, CAN'T YOU AT LEAST KNOCK?!
And I brought a gift!
PLEASE, I'M PRACTICALLY FAMILY!

WHAT?!
YOU NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT THAT!
BUT YOU KNOW HOW KEN-KUN'S ROOM IS A JUNGLE!

THIS MORNING, HIMIKO-SAN...
I DRAGGED HIM HERE!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, YUUKI?
I THOUGHT HE COULD HELP OUT WITH THE CHORES TODAY! ♡
?


SOOH, HE'LL PRACTI-CALLY BE GROWING..
...MUSH-ROOMS IN THERE!

That lazy bum!

ACTUALLY, THIS IS JUST WHAT I NEEDED. WITHOUT HIM AROUND, WE CAN GO THROUGH HIS STUFF!
LOOK OUT, KEN! SHE'S ONTO YOU!

KEN! NO FAIR!
YEAH! KEN-KUN'S THE ONE BEHIND THE MUSH-ROOMS!
SHUT UP! GO DO IT YOURSELF! I'M OUT!

I DON'T NEED THIS!
I'LL BE SLEEPING IN THE OFFICE, WHERE THE AIR CONDITIONER ACTUALLY WORKS!

On the topic of fan letters..

I love reading the letters I get from my readers! Thank you so much for the time to write me such personalized letters! It's really fun to see all the different opinions shared by readers.

After reading the "What if Memeri were a girl?" gag strip, many suggested I make a female-Memeri version of Game X Rush! Ha ha! And, as most Hana to Yumi comic readers are, there were a lot who wanted a love-comedy story. I also happen to see that many readers were satisfied with a boy protagonist in this very boyish shoje manga. I enjoy writing through both male and female protagonists, and I always try to make my latest work different from the last.

I love them all. school-life stories, fantasy, scandals.

They left the business with Kan.
THEY'RE REALLY LIVING THE CAREFREE LIFE.
OUR FOLKS ARE RETIRED OUT IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE.
That so?
SO, HOW COME YOU TWO DON'T LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS?
SILENCE
...HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO ACT AROUND HIM NOW?
HUH?
AFTER WHAT YUUKI SAID YESTERDAY, I CAN'T FIND IT IN MYSELF TO GET MAD AT HIM.
SO...
CRAP. WHAT DO I DO NOW?!
"DEAR MEMORI FUJIEDA, I CAN'T FORGET THE DAY THAT YOU HELD ME IN YOUR ARMS..."
SOME LETTERS FELL DOWN!
NOT AN-OTHER WORD, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

I W-WAS NEVER SURE HOW TO WRITE THEM BACK.
BLUSH
THESE ARE GIVEN TO ME BY PAST CLIENTS.
Wow!
HIMIKO-SAN, GET A CAMERA OVER HERE! HE'S TOO CUTE!
KNOCK IT OFF!
AND HERE ARE SOME OF YOUR REPLIES! "I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT, BUT..."
WHOA, THERE'RE TONS OF THESE!
"Be my bodyguard forever!"
LOOKS LIKE A KID'S DRAWING.
AH, THIS OLD THING.
WHAT'S THIS?
QUIT LOOKING THROUGH MY STUFF!
NOW, WHAT'S THIS?
HOW CUTE.
OKAY! SO MY BRO-THER --!
SHING!
LOOK, YOU DON'T HAVE TO HOLD BACK ON MY ACCOUNT.
ERRR...
ERR...
"IT PISSES ME OFF TO SEE YOU SMILING, SO LOVED AND PROTECTED."
BACK WHEN I WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MY BROTH--
Ugh!

Trying not to smile

WHEN MY PARENTS FIRST DIED AND I WAS ADOPTED INTO THE FUJIEDA FAMILY, IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO GET USED TO IT...
...AND I USED TO BE SCARED OF KEN.
HMPH!
HEY!
HOW ...?
HOW COULD YOU...?
QUIT CRYING!
Hic! Sniffle!
ONE DAY, MY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT WAS TO DRAW A PICTURE OF MY FAMILY...
...BUT I COULDN'T DRAW A PICTURE OF MY DEAD PARENTS.
AND THAT'S
...THE PICTURE HE CAME UP WITH.
AND DRAW ME INSTEAD, STUPID!
BUT THEN HE GOT ANGRY AND TOLD ME TO DRAW HIM BETTER-LOOKING!
THAT'S BECAUSE HE WAS TOO SHY TO SAY HE LIKED IT.
MAY-BE.

THAT'S WHEN I STARTED FOLLOWING KEN DAY IN AND DAY OUT.
...WHY WEREN'T YOU ABLE TO DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR PARENTS?
HEY...
Oh don't say that
But now I see him for the big goof he is
MY PARENTS DIED IN A FIRE.
.....
YUUKI-KUN...
...AND THAT I WAS THE ONLY SURVI-VOR.
THE POLICE SAID IT WAS ARSON....
BUR-NED?
ALL THEIR PHOTO-GRAPHS WERE BURNED...
BECAUSE I COULDN'T REMEM-BER THEM

EVEN NOW, I CAN'T REMEMBER THEM.
MY MOTHER...
...DISAPPEARED INTO THE FLAMES...
...AND I STILL CAN'T REMEMBER HER FACE.
My Family
Grade 2, Class 4
Mamori Fujieda

MEM
--?
WAIT, NO! IT'S A WOMAN!
I'M SORRY, BUT DO YOU WORK AT THIS OFFICE?
WE RECEIVED A CALL FROM YOU THIS MORNING, AND I FOLLOWED MY SON HERE.
HE'S BEEN ACTING A LITTLE STRANGE, SO...
...SO I HOPE MY SON, MEMORI, HASN'T BEEN BOTHERING YOU.

I'M SURPRISED.
THIS WOMAN MUST BE...
DID SHE JUST SAY "MEMORI"?
ME-MORI?
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE STILL ALIVE...
...MIYUKI ASAKA.
I'M ALMOST SURE HE'S HERE.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE MEMORI IS?
HAVE WE...MET BEFORE?
NO.

YOU...YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER, DO YOU, MEMORI-CHAN?
NOT EVEN YOUR MOM?
SOME-THING WRONG?
NO. NOTH-ING.
.....
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I HAVE ALL THE MEMORIES I NEED WITH KEN AND MY FAMILY.
BUT HOW COULD YOU FORGET...
...YOUR OWN MOTHER?
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S THOUGHT OF NOTHING BUT YOU DAY AND NIGHT!
ズキン
ズキン
THERE'S NOTHING CRUEL-ER...
...THAN BEING FOR-GOTTEN.
"MEMORI..."
"MEMORI..."
ズキ

UH, I MEAN ...
!
"STAY WITH ME FOREVER."
YUUKI-KUN...
HIMIKO-SAN.
YOU CALLED MY HOUSE TODAY, DIDN'T YOU?
BECAUSE NO "YUUKI SHIN" CAME UP DURING YOUR SEARCH.
EVEN THOUGH I'D NEVER TOLD YOU MY NUMBER.
SHUT UP!!

HMM. YOUR DETECTIVE SKILLS ARE AS GOOD AS THEY SAY, KIMIKO-SAN.
I KEPT IT A SECRET FROM KEN-KUN AND MEMORI-KUN.
TWELVE YEARS AGO, I WAS DOING RESEARCH ON A MISSING PERSON BY THE NAME OF MIYUKI ASAKA.
WHY? WHY DID YOU CALL THE ASAKA HOUSE?
I WAS SHOC-KED...
.....
MEMORI-KUN'S MOTHER IS STILL ALIVE, ISN'T SHE?
WELL, I WAS SHOCKED TO HEAR IT WAS FUJIEDA ON THE OTHER LINE!
...WHEN HER VOICE WAS REPLACED BY YOURS ON THE PHONE!
I'M SORRY, BUT...
AREN'T YOU GOING TO ASK ME WHY I'M LIVING WITH HE!?
.....
THAT'S WHY YOU CALLED, ISN'T IT?

Heh heh!
IT'S MY AND KEN-KUN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THAT BOY.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO STARE.
MEMORI-KUN KEPT INSISTING YOU WERE DANGEROUS...
...I DID A BACKGROUND CHECK ON YOU, TOO.
...BECAUSE OF THE SCARY LOOKS YOU'D SOMETIMES GIVE HIM.
KEN-KUN LIKES YOU. REALLY.
And so do I ♥
AND... WE'RE VERY, VERY THANKFUL...
...FOR YOUR SAVING MEMORI-KUN BEFORE.
YUUKI-KUN...
...YOUR EYES HAVE GOTTEN GENTLER LATELY.
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU GUYS LOVE HIM.
Yeah yeah
EVEN THOUGH HE MAY NOT SHOW IT MUCH OF THE TIME, KEN-KUN ADORES THAT BOY.

MEMORI-KUN'S STARTED OPENING UP TO YOU, TOO.
...AND I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM... ...TALK ABOUT HIS FAMILY AS CHEERFULLY AS HE DOES WITH YOU.
ACTUALLY, THEY WERE ALWAYS GENTLE.
IT'S MORE LIKE...YOUR SHELL IS FINALLY CRUMBLING.
YOU'RE LIKE A MEAN OLD CAT THAT'S FINALLY WARMED UP TO PEOPLE.
Now I'm a cat?
Used to be a dog.
...HE HARDLY INTERACTED WITH ANYONE.
WHETHER IT WAS WORK OR SCHOOL...
...FOR HIM TO HAVE YOU AROUND.
I THINK IT'S GOOD...
SO PROMISE ME...
HE WAS SO LONELY.

"PROMISE ME THAT YOU WON'T BREAK MEMORI-KUN'S HEART."
THAT'S A PRETTY TALL ORDER.
YUURI!
I'M SORRY...
...FOR TELLING YOU TO SHUT UP!
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I WAS BEING A PRYING IDIOT.

...I'M REALLY GLAD THAT YOU WERE HONEST WITH ME.
AND...
..ABOUT YESTER-DAY...
I KNOW IT'S NOT ALWAYS THIS SIMPLE, BUT...
...IF YOU EVER CAN'T FIND A WAY OUT...
...I WANT YOU TO KNOW I'LL ALWAYS BE HERE..
EVEN IF IT'S ABOUT SOME-THING HEAVY, I APPRECIATE YOU TELLING ME.
...TO LISTEN.

I WON'T BREAK MY PROMISE TO YOU.
YOU REALLY ARE A PIECE OF WORK.
ALL RIGHT, HIMIKO-SAN.
A REAL IDIOT.
PFFT, WHATEVER.
WHAT'S WITH THE FACE?!
WHY?!
You have no idea how hard I worked to come up with that speech!
I TELL YOU I'M A MURDERER, AND THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY?
Sheesh
WELL, WHAT ELSE SHOULD I SAY?!

PLEASE...
IS MY MEMORI HERE?!
NOPE, HE'S NOT.
THEN, WHERE--
EVEN IF I KNEW, I WOULDN'T LET YOU SEE HIM.
BUT... BUT WHY?
MY POOR BOY'S BEEN ACTING SO STRANGE LATELY.
THE WAY HE RAN OUT OF THE HOUSE, I THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD FIND SOMETHING HERE--
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR TWELVE YEARS!
AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU DID TWELVE YEARS AGO.

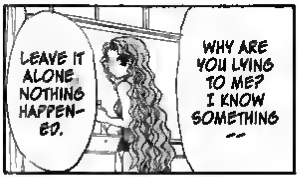
BUT MEMORI DOESN'T KNOW A DAMN THING ABOUT IT.
AND I'LL NEVER LET YOU SEE HIM AGAIN.
WHAT ...?
WHY?
BUT... HE'S MY SON...
NO, HE'S NOT.
HE'S MY LITTLE BROTHER!

WHERE IS MY CHILD?!
LET ME SEE HIM!
NOOOOOOO!!!
DON'T YOU DARE TAKE HIM AWAY FROM ME!
NO...

YOU MIND EXPLAIN-ING WHAT HAPPENED?

IF YOU WERE DRUNK, YOU'D BE A HELL OF A LOT WORSE OFF!
AND YOU WEREN'T EVEN DRINKING TODAY!
Grrrrrr!

JEEZ, I TOLD YOU. I GOT A LITTLE TIPSY AND FELL OFF THE OFFICE VERANDA.
You don't just fall over a railing like that!
THAT'S A LIE!


WHY ARE YOU LYING TO ME? I KNOW SOMETHING --
LEAVE IT ALONE NOTHING HAPPENED.

WHAT?!

I'M YOUR LITTLE BROTHER...
...QUIT HIDING THINGS FROM ME!

THIS ISN'T A JOKE, YOU KNOW!
ONE WRONG STEP AND YOU COULD'VE DIED!

IDIOT! OCTOPUS! SQUID-HEAD!
IF YOU'RE MY LITTLE BROTHER, YOU SHOULDN'T BE DOUBTING ME!
YOU DUNCE!
I SAID I'M FINE, SO TRUST ME! I'M FINE!
AND IF I END UP TAKING A TURN FOR THE WORSE...
...YOU'LL BE THE FIRST TO KNOW IT. SO QUIT WORRYING!
FINE, FINE, I'M GET IT GOING HOME.
Sigh.
I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO OUT-STUBBORN HIM.
AND I'LL DO MORE THAN JUST WAIT AROUND FOR YOU.
I'LL BE YOUR BODY-GUARD, SO CALL ANYTIME.

UGH. OW, OW, OW...
LOOKS LIKE I BETTER GET USED TO THIS HOSPITAL BED.
...MIYUKI ASAKA CAME TO THE OFFICE.
TO-DAY ...
SAID SHE WANTED MEMORI BACK.
NOW, OF ALL TIMES.
HEY NOW ...
QUIT CRYING, YOU BIG BABY.
BUT I'M THE ONE WHO CALLED HER! I WASN'T EVEN THINK-ING...
I'M STILL ALIVE, AREN'T I?
And hey, if you really felt bad you'd go get me some sake
BESIDES ;
...AS LONG AS SHE WAS STILL ALIVE, I KNEW THIS MIGHT HAPPEN.

IT'S NOT LIKE KEN TO PUT UP A FRONT TO ME LIKE THAT...
SO WHY...?
IT SEEMS THAT THE PAST CAN'T STAY BURIED FOREVER.
HEY, YUUKI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
DID HIMIKO-SAN TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED TO KEN?
IS KEN... DEAD?
UH, NO. HE'S FINE.
IT WAS A BAD FALL, BUT HE'D BEEN THROUGH WORSE.
I SEE.
SO, HE SURVIVED...

I'VE COME HERE TO FINISH THE JOB.
THEN HIS FALL WASN'T ENOUGH...
OUT OF MY WAY...
...MEMORI-CHAN.

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GAME 11

YES.
OH PLEASE. DO YOU REALLY EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT?
I DON'T CARE IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME OR NOT...
...BUT I'M THE ONE WHO PUSHED KEN OFF THE VERANDA.
YOU'RE SAYING YOU'RE HERE...TO KILL HIM?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO GAVE HIM THOSE INJURIES?

Character Memo
Miyuki Asaka, age 37
DOB: 7/20 (Cancer)
Blood type: Type A
Height: 165 cm

Possibly the hardest character to handle in in my entire manga-making history. But also, one of the most sympathetic- at least to me. I feel like her face and personality are probably stuck as a little girl forever. Sorta like if Momori were always dressed as a woman.

IF HE'S NOT DEAD, THEN I'LL HAVE TO KILL HIM.
.....
OH, REALLY? WELL, FINE THEN.
OH, YOU WANNA FIGHT ME? I DON'T SUGGEST--
BEFORE I HEAR YOUR LYING LITTLE SPEECH, LET ME SAY SOMETHING FIRST.
I DIDN'T PUNCH YOU BECAUSE I REALLY THINK YOU PUSHED KEN.
IT'S BECAUSE I KNOW...
...YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING FROM ME.

...LEFT IN THE DARK!
I'M SICK AND TIRED OF BEING THE ONLY ONE...
JUST LIKE KEN IS.
I TOLD YOU I'D ALWAYS BE THERE TO LISTEN!
DID ANY PART OF WHAT I SAID GET THROUGH TO YOU?!
AND YOUR ACTIONS PROVE IT.
IT WASN'T SOME ACCIDENT, YUUKI. SOMEBODY TRIED TO KILL KEN.
T-THAT'S NOT IT. I...
DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T NOTICE?!

YOU'RE COVERING FOR SOMEONE AGAIN.
THAT'S WHY YOU--
YOU'RE WRONG!
I WAS ONLY --!
I...
YUUKI...
..YOU TOLD ME YOU DIDN'T WANT TO KILL ANYONE.
ALL I CAN BELIEVE IN NOW...
...ARE THOSE WORDS.

...THAT I'D DO ANYTHING FOR HER...

I...REGRET THAT NOW.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN SO CLOSE TO YOU.
I HAD TO GET CLOSE TO THE REAL MEMORI THAT SHE CHERISHED SO DEEPLY.
I SHOULD'VE KNOWN. I SHOULD'VE KNOWN!
BUT I COULDN'T HELP BUT LOOK FOR YOU.
YUUKI?

...I CAN NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN.
I...
I DON'T BELONG THERE ANYMORE.
YUUKI, YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE! WHAT'S HAPPENED?!
AFTER YOU MEET YUKI-SAN, WHAT THE HELL WILL I BE ANY GOOD FOR?!
Y-YOU CAN'T REALLY MEAN TH-...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO.
YUUKI!
LEAVE HER SIDE!
BUT EVEN DESPITE THAT...
...I STILL CAN'T...
THAT WOMAN IS BROKEN.
SHE LOVES YOU SO MUCH SHE KILLS EVERYTHING ELSE.

THE HELL WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?!
FIRST, HE FOLLOWS AFTER ME LIKE A DOG...
...AND THEN, WITHOUT WARNING...
...HE SAYS HE'S GOING TO JUST DISAPPEAR?
AS IF!
You're not getting away that easily, jerk!
KEN MAY NOT LIKE IT, BUT I NEED TO HAVE A WORD WITH HIM..
WHO THE HELL IS HE COVERING FOR?
"I'M ALL RIGHT, YUKI-SAN."
YUKI...
YUKI!
SHE STARTED SAYING SOME CRAZY STUFF...
..ABOUT MEMORI.

SAID HE HAD BEEN ACTING STRANGE AND RAN OUT OF THE HOUSE.
...?
SHE MADE IT SOUND LIKE SHE'D BEEN WITH HIM THIS WHOLE TIME!
WHEN I TOLD HER I WOULDN'T LET HER SEE HIM, SHE FREAKED AND PUSHED ME OVER THE RAILING.
IT WAS CREEPY HOW MUCH SHE LOOKED LIKE MEMORI....
THAT DAMN MIYUKI ASAKA...
MIYUKI... ASAKA?

"SHE PUSHED ME OVER THE RAILING."
AND SHE TRIED TO KILL KEN?
IT CAN'T BE!
BUT MOM WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE DIED IN A FIRE... ...ALONG WITH MY DAD!
BUT BACK THEN...
"MEMORI..."
IS IT TRUE, THOUGH?
SHE'S ALREADY DEAD!
MY MOTHER...
"...I CAN NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN."
BUT BUT WHY ISN'T MY MOTHER...
MY MOTHER IS STILL ALIVE?!
WHAT...
IS KEN TALKING ABOUT?

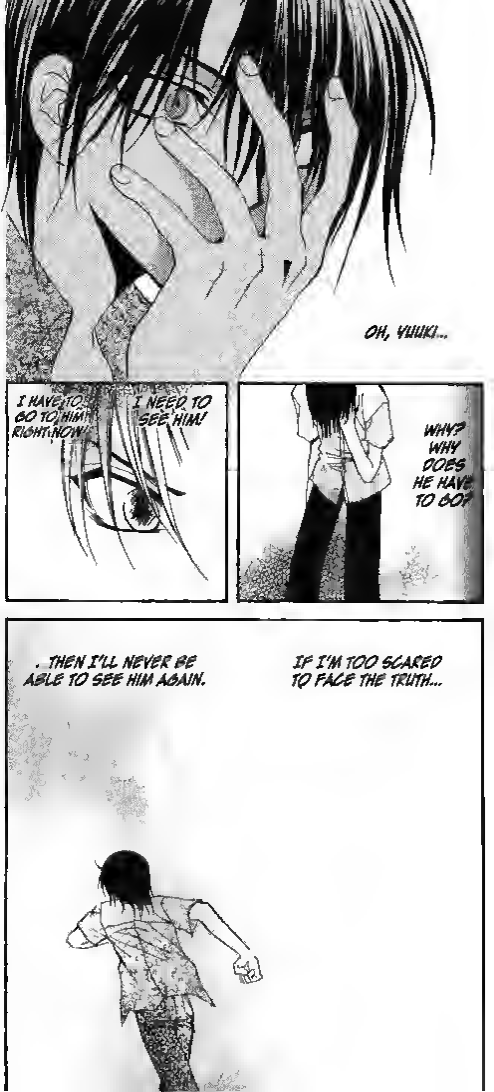
Just the other day my younger sister gave birth to her first son! There's no one else younger than my sister in my family (they're all adults) so it feels pretty weird to see a little baby (And that makes me an aunt! Eep!)

Its surprising how even such tiny humans can be such handfuls Ha ha My poor sister never gets a wink of sleep, she's so busy with the new baby Its crazy how one day she's helping me draw manga and the next she's raising a child!

It was pretty tough on her, because the baby refused to come out on time (It was well past the due date) But the moment he popped out, he needed all the attention in the world Its incredibly worrisome when things don't go as planned Ha ha!

When I was a baby, I just slept all the time and didn't even wake up for breast-feeding (they had to nudge me awake to drink) I think I was even still sleeping during mealtime when I was one year old!

Not much has changed since then


OH, YUUKI...
I HAVE TO... GO TO HIM! RIGHT NOW!
I NEED TO SEE HIM!
WHY? WHY DOES HE HAVE TO GO?
. THEN I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEE HIM AGAIN.
IF I'M TOO SCARED TO FACE THE TRUTH...

KEN-KUN...
...DO YOU KNOW... ABOUT THE FIRE TWELVE YEARS AGO?
YEAH.
I WAS THE ONE WHO DRAGGED MEMORI OUT OF THE FLAMES.
THE ASAKA HOUSE USED TO BE NEXT DOOR TO OURS, AND SHE WAS PRETTY FAMOUS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
SUCH A PRETTY FACE, WITH A BODY RIDDLED WITH SCARS.
MIYUKI ASAKA WAS BEATEN BY HER BASTARD HUSBAND.
MY FATHER COULDN'T IGNORE IT AND EVEN TRIED TO STOP HIM ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION.
THEN, WE HEARD THEY WERE GETTING A DIVORCE.
THE POOR WOMAN SOUNDS LIKE THE VICTIM IN ALL OF IT.
DID MIYUKI-SAN START THE FI--?
NO.
MEMORI TOLD ME SOMETHING WHILE WE WERE RUNNING FROM THE HOUSE...

I REMEMBER HOW MUCH YOU USED TO LOVE THEM AS A CHILD.
IT'S A PAPER LANTERN.
MEMORI, LOOK!
HMM?
YES. HAVE YOU FORGOTTEH?
OH...IS THAT SO?
UH, YEAH. H-HE'S DEAD.
GOOOD. THEH YOU MUSTH'T GO THERE EVER AGAIH.
.. DID THE MAH FROM THE FUJIEDA OFFICE DIE?
ME-MORI ...
HE SAID HE'D SET BOTH HIS MOTHER AND FATHER ON FIRE.
WHY DOH'T WE MOVE SOME-PLACE HEW?
YUKI-SAH..

SOME-WHERE FAR AWAY.
I'M TIRED OF THIS PLACE.
AS LONG AS I'M WITH YOU, MEMORI...
...MOMMY WILL BE HAPPY ANYWHERE.
THIS MUST BE THE OLDER SECTOR OF TOWN...
DOES YUUKI REALLY LIVE HERE?
!
Huff! Huff!

YO.
WHAT--!?
H-HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
I CHECKED THE DATA HIMIKO-SAN GATHERED ON YOU.
GET OUT OF HERE.
NOT UNTIL WE'VE FINISHED TALKING. LET'S GO INSIDE--

OH, MY...
AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE?
IT SMELLS LIKE BLOOD

ゴオッ!!!
"...MORI..."
"MEMORI..."
THE FLAMES...
"I WON'T LOSE YOU."

THAT'S...RIGHT.

THIS WOMAN...

SHE DISAPPEARED INTO THE FLAMES.

AND KILLED MY FATHER.

SHE'S...MY MOTHER.

I CAN'T BELIEVE...SHE'S STILL ALIVE.
ドクン
ドクン
MEMORI, IS THIS A FRIEND OF YOURS?
MEMORI...?
WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE YOU FEELING ALL RIGHT?
YUUKI IS...?
.....
"SHE WENT ON ABOUT SOME CRAZY STUFF..."
"SAID HE WAS ACTING STRANGE AND RAN OUT OF THE HOUSE."
"SHE MADE IT SOUND LIKE SHE'D BEEN WITH HIM THIS WHOLE TIME."
WITH HIM....?
SHE WAS WITH YUUKI THIS WHOLE TIME?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME INSIDE AND REST?
SEEING AS YOU'RE A FRIEND OF ME-MORI'S ...
YUKI-SAN...
MEMORI.
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?
CALL ME "MOM."
...YOU'VE BEEN LIVING HERE...
ALL THIS TIME...
IN PLACE... OF ME?

THAT'S RIGHT. I WOULD...
YES. MEMORI USED TO PLAY WITH THEM ALL THE TIME.
I HAVEN'T SEEN A PAPER LANTERN IN SO LONG.
...AS MEMORI?
BUT IT WAS THANKS TO THAT FIRE...
"NO! PLEASE, YOU CAN'T!"
"IF WE'RE GETTING A DIVORCE, I'M TAKING MEMORI!"
...AS EXPECTED, THEY STARTED A FIRE.
...PRETEND TO STARE INTO THE FLICKERING LIGHT, WHILE I COVERED MY EARS FROM MY PARENTS' YELLING.
I'D TELL HIM TO BE CAREFUL WITH THEM, BUT...
...THAT THE WICKED MAN WENT AWAY.
"I'M NOT LOSING MEMORI TO YOU!"

ALL THOSE TERRIBLE MEMORIES ARE RISING TO THE SURFACE.

SO I'LL NEVER HAVE TO FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF LOSING MY PRECIOUS CHILD AGAIN.

I REMEMBER MY MOTHER...

...LOOKING FOR ME IN THE FLAMES.

I HID THE MEMORY TRYING TO ESCAPE...

YUUKI...

...AND THEN...

THE REASOH YOU TOOK THAT BLADE FOR ME?

WAS THIS THE REASON YOU LOOKED FOR ME?

"BECAUSE I ALSO HAVE SOMEONE I CARE ABOUT."

BECAUSE OF MY MOTH--

SHUT UP!!

ONE MORE WORD ...
...AND YOU'RE DEAD!
DO YOU PLAN ON TAKING AWAY...
...THE ONE THING I HAVE TO CALL FAMILY?!
DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?! I'M NOT NEEDED AS LONG AS YOU'RE NERE!
YUUKI!
I'M NOT YUUKI!
YES, YOU ARE!

IF YOU KEEP TRYING TO BE MEMORI, YOU'RE GONNA LEAVE HERE, AREN'T YOU?!
I CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF YOU LEAVING...
BUT I KNOW THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT YOU.
I'M SO SELFISH... I WANT TO LIVE AS EQUALS WITH YOU.
WHERE WE CAN TALK...
...AND LAUGH, TOGETHER.
WHOEVER SAID YOU WOULDN'T BE NEEDED?!
IF YOU RAN AWAY ON ME WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING...
...I'D KNOCK THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS OUT OF YOU!
I WANT TO

...THAT THERE WAS A REASON WE MET.
MEM--
MEMORI?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
THAT BOY IS MEMORI.
AND HE'S MY SON.
WHO ARE YOU?
AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY MEMORI?
MOM...

STOP TRYING TO HOLD HIM BACK WITH THAT NAME.
PLEASE, MOM..
WHAT?
I WON'T LET YOU TRAP YUUKI ANY LONGER.
HE'S NOT MEMORI.
AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO...
...TIE HIM DOWN WITH THE PAST ANYMORE.
WHAT?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
HE'S ALL I HAVE! I PROTECT HIM WITH EVERYTHING! EVERY-THING!
HE IS MEMORI! WE'VE LIVED TOGETHER FOR SO LONG!
YOU'RE NOT PROTEC-TING NIM!
THE REAL MEMORI MAY NEVER COME BACK TO YOU AGAIN...

...BUT THIS DEFINITELY ISN'T WHERE YUUKI BELONGS.
YOU'RE
...JUST LIKE THAT MAN.
YOU'RE JUST THE SAME..
STOP IT. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT...

YOU'RE TRYING TO TAKE MY MEMORI AWAY FROM ME, AREN'T YOU?!
DON'T DO IT, YUKI-SAN!
MEM-ORI...
...KILL HIM.
MEM-ORI...
YUKI-SAN!

HURRY!
KILL THAT MEDDLESOME BOY!
KILL HIM!
NO, YUKI-SAN.
THAT'S THE ONE THING... ...I CAN'T DO FOR YOU.
PLEASE, MEMORI... ...DON'T LEAVE ME.
NO...

STAY WITH ME...
MOM!!
YUUKI!

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GAME 12

MEMORI!
YUKI-SAN, ARE YOU OKAY?
IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS IN HERE. PLEASE, YOU HAVE TO GET OUTSIDE.
!
!!
.....

IT'S SO HOT!
YUUKI! MOM!!
MOM...
HEY, MEMORI-CHAN!
YUUKI!
YOU'RE BY THE DOOR! RUN!
YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE! THE PLACE IS COMING DOWN!
BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU?!
FORGET ME, JUST RUN!
YOU KNOW I CAN'T DO THAT!

JUST LIKE WHEN I WAS IN THAT FIRE, TWELVE YEARS AGO.
THE HEAT IS INCREDIBLE.
DON'T WORRY, I'M COMING TO YOU!
...NEVER KNOWING HOW MUCH SHE SUFFERED.
...I RAN AWAY.
I LEFT MY MOTHER BEHIND...
BACK THEN...
I KNOW MY MOTHER NEEDS YUUKI, TOO.
BUT...
...I'M NOT THE SAME BOY...
...I WAS TWELVE YEARS AGO.
HE TRULY IS SO KIND.
UNLIKE ME, HE'S COME TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT HER.
SHE'S THE ONE PERSON HE SAID HE CARES ABOUT.

...I'VE FOUND PEOPLE TO PROTECT. I'VE DISCOVERED THE JOY OF LIVING.
AFTER MEETING THE FUJIEDA FAMILY AND TAKING UP THE FAMILY BUSINESS AS A BODYGUARD...
I CAN'T RUN AWAY THIS TIME
I'M GOING TO SAVE HER!
MEMOR!
MEMOR!
YUKI-SAN, HURRY...
!

MEMORI...
...THAT'S ENOUGH!
NO! I'M NOT LEAVING WITHOUT YOU!
I'LL BE FINE.
YUKI-SAN, PLEASE, YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE.
I...I'M NOT MEMORI.
...THAT YOU LOVE ME?
BUT WILL YOU STILL SAY...
I'LL PROTECT YOU.
...JUST LIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN WITH ME.
I'LL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU...

MEMORI!
NNGH!
IT'S SO HOT.
ME-MORI...
SO VERY HOT...
ME-MORI!
IT WAS SO HOT THAT DAY...
THAT DAY I LOST MY SON IN THE FIRE.
AND I'M ABOUT TO LOSE HIM AGAIN.
.....!
WHY CAN'T I PROTECT MEMORI?!

MOM!
HUH...??
SOME-BODY, HELP!
PLEASE, SOME-BODY!
PLEASE...

I know that the fire spread pretty quickly, but please understand ^^;;
I only had 30 pages to wrap up the rest of the story! That's only 15 times you the reader, get to turn the page! There were so many episodes that I needed to do, so trust me, I wish I had at least another 2 or 3 pages to do it That's why the panels got smaller and smaller, and I stuffed as much as I could into these 30 pages It takes so much time drawing a lot of panels per page ^^;; I want to get better at them I'm always asking myself, how can I be better at drawing? But I don't know a quick way to get better at it I always want to ask people (ha ha!), and someone recently told me it takes **love** and **passion!**
I wonder if you can sense how hard I tried to instill my desire to draw something awesome in this book.
I hope something got through

!!
HUH?
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF HIM FOR ME.
MOM!
NO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
...I HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO LIVE FOR.
AND AS LONG AS I CAN'T PROTECT MEMORI...
...IT'S JUST AS YOU SAID.
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING. I CAN'T PROTECT HIM.
I TRIED TO PROTECT HIM, BUT...
THAT BOY WILL DIE IF I STAY.

MOM!
STOP IT!
THIS ISN'T WHAT YUUKI WANTS!
AND NEITHER DO I!
!
YUKI-SAN!
YUUKI, IS THERE ANY WAY FOR NER TO ESCAPE GOING THAT WAY?!
NO, SNE'S COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY FIRE.
ISN'T THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO?!
MEMORI-CHAN?!
I'M GOING AROUND, SO YOU--

DON'T COME ANY CLOSER!
I WANT MEMORI TO LIVE ON.
AFTER I RESCUED NIM FROM BEING HIT BY A CAR ALL THOSE YEARS AGO..
...I, MYSELF, WAS SAVED.
I FELT LIKE MY MEMORI HAD COME BACK FOR ME...
I WAS SO HAPPY WITH YOU IN MY LIFE.
YOU, ANO...
...MY MEMORI.
I LOVE YOU BOTH.

YUKI-SAN!
MOM!!
W-WHY... YUKI-SAN..
YOU TOLD ME YOU'D ALWAYS BE WITH ME!
AND I WOULD HAVE DIED WITH YOU.

I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER BE ABLE TO FORGET WHAT I SAW THAT DAY...
...WE CONTINUED TO CRY.
EVEN AFTER THE FLAMES ENGULFED THE HOUSE AND TURNED IT TO ASH...

LIAR. YOUR BURNS WERE WORSTE THAN MINE!
YO, MEMORI-CHAN. I'M DOIN' JUST FINE!
AND I'LL NEVER FORGET HER...NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME PASSES.
On the rooftop
YOU SEE HER IN ME, DON'T YOU?
IT'S LIKE...SHE'S STILL ALIVE SOMEHOW.
YUUKI! DID YOU ESCAPE FROM THE HOSPITAL AGAIN?
I FEEL THE SAME WAY.
IT'S OKAY.
EXCEPT--

I PROMISED THAT I'D PROTECT HER...
...BUT I COULDN'T.
I'M SURE SHE'S HAPPY JUST KNOWING...
...THAT HER MEMORI WAS THINKING OF HER.
MEMORI-CHAN...
HMM?
YOU KNOW, I'VE ALWAYS HATED THAT NAME.
WHAT?!
I'D GET UPSET JUST HEARING IT!
BESIDES, IT'S SUCH A FAIRYTALE NAME. AND THE REAL MEMORI IS SUCH A OOOFUS...
THAT'S WHY I HAD TO DUMB IT DOWN BY ADDING A "-CHAN."
HUH?
EXCUSE ME?!
DUMB IT DOWN?!
BUT...
...I REALLY APPRECIATED IT WHEN YOU SAID...
...THAT I'M YUUKI, NOT MEMORI.
EVEN THOUGH I'VE NEVER REALLY LIKED THIS NAME, EITHER.

THEN WHAT DID YOU...
...WANT HER TO BE?
...THAT I DIDN'T REALLY WANT HER TO BE MY REAL MOM.
Hmm
I THINK IT'S BECAUSE I LOVED HER SO MUCH...
...YOU HATED BEING MY REPLACEMENT?
DID YOU REFUSE TO CALL HER "MOM" BECAUSE...
JERK! YOU'RE CRUISIN' FOR A BRUISIN'!
That would have just been sick!
...BECAME LOVERS!
SHAKE SHAKE.
WELL, I'M JUST GLAD YOU NEVER...
...BY MY MOM'S SIDE.
...FOR STAYING...
THANK YOU...
YUUKI...

.....
Looks like you're ready for work tomorrow!
As if.
KEN! HIMIKO-SAN!
ME-MORI!
BY THE WAY, YUUKI, WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING NOW?
IF YOU'RE OUT OF OPTIONS, YOU COULD ALWAYS TAKE UP BODY-GUAR--

NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT! JEEZ!
SO...YOU GUYS BOY-FRIENDS NOW?
Hmm
SILENCE
.....
...STAY HERE?
CAN I...
YUUKI, WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?
.....
...I CAN'T HELP BUT ADMIRE YOUR LIFE.
THE WAY YOU ALL ALWAYS LOOK SO HAPPY...
HUH?
IT'S NOT A MATTER OF WORTH.
BUT I JUST DON'T KNOW IF I'M WORTHY OF IT.
...IT'S LIKE THERE'S A HUGE HOLE IN MY LIFE, AND I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FILL IT.
WITH YUKI-SAN GONE...

I WANT YOU TO STAY.
WITH ME.
HUH?
HEY.
THANK YOU, MEMORI.
DON'T MAKE ME SAY IT AGAIN!
I THINK IT'S CUTE!
GET A ROOM, YOU GUYS.
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?

UH RIGHT.
SEE YOU 'ROUND.
.....
THANKS, MEMORI-CHAN.

YUUKI...?

.....
MEMORI-KUN?
Yuuki Shin

HIS BACK-PACK'S MISS-ING...
DID HE RUN OFF AGAIN?
I'm glad I met you.
WHAT'S THIS?

SHEESH, THAT REALLY HURT.
MY WHOLE BODY HURTS.
OH, WELL ...
NO USE COMPLAINING NOW.
I WONDER WHAT YOU'LL THINK WHEN YOU'VE SEEN THAT I'VE GONE.
BUT I KNOW I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH YET.
I WAS SHOCKED WHEN YOU SAID YOU WANTED ME TO STAY.
WILL YOU BE MAD?
RELIEVED?
OR WILL YOU BE A LITTLE SAD WITHOUT ME?

I THINK I HAVE TO BE ON MY OWN FOR A WHILE.
UNTIL I'VE FOUND A WAY TO FILL THAT VOID...
...AND I'M ABLE TO BE HAPPY WITH MYSELF.
THEN MAYBE...
...THERE'LL COME A DAY...
...WHEN I THINK IT'S RIGHT FOR ME TO COME BACK.
BUT NOT UNTIL THEN.

KEN!
Three years later...
PIPE DOWN, MEMORI!
I CAN'T NEAR THE RADIO!
QUIT BETTING ON HORSES IN THE OFFICE!
I'VE GOT SOME PLANS WITH A FRIEND...
...SO WHAT'S THE SUDDEN ASSIGNMENT?
TODAY'S CLIENT IS THE DAUGHTER OF A SUPER-WEALTHY CEO!
I'LL BE ON MY WAY.
FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD...
Go out and make us money!
HEY! YOU HAD PLANS WITH ME FIRST!

WHAT IF I SAID I'D PAY YOU TEN MILLION YEN FOR THE DAY?
SORRY, BUT I'VE GOT WORK.
HEYA, SAYAKO.
Don't brush me off, you jerk!
Huh?! Of course I would!
Stunned
SORRY, BUT I'M A FUJIEDA BODYGUARD FOR LIFE!
WHEN WILL YOU GIVE UP YOUR SHABBY JOB AND COME WORK FOR ME?
Brat
IN CASE ...
...I EVER RUN INTO A CERTAIN SOMEBODY AGAIN.
I DON'T MIND.
THEY MAKE ME STAND OUT.
OH YEAH?
YOUR BURN SCARS HAVEN'T FADED...
HE'LL HAVE THE SAME SCARS AS ME.

WHAT IS IT?
NOTH-ING ...

Mini Stage

"Twelve Years of Being Loved"

I READ IT IN SOME BOOK ONCE.

IT SAID THAT TYPE AB PISCES ARE DEVOTED TO THE ONES THEY LOVE.

SO DEVOTED, IN FACT, THAT IT MAKES FOR A ROCKY RELATIONSHIP.

I HAPPEN TO BE A TYPE AB PISCES.

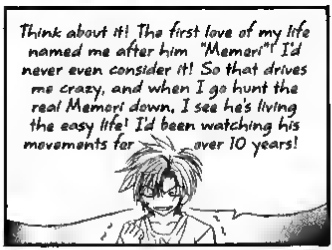
A Mother? Or Woman?

Another Game Rush

Himiko chan can be so tactless sometimes

Those two will never get along.

A Question for Yuuki-kun


Think about it! The first love of my life named me after him "Memori"! I'd never even consider it! So that drives me crazy, and when I go hunt the real Memori down, I see he's living the easy life! I'd been watching his movements for over 10 years!

Eh, You still love me
That's pretty significant
Wow, so you gave me your childhood?
Waaaah!
Give me back my youth!!
I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

Knowing that he's the apple of Yuuki's eye
Memori chan has no problem saying anything

Forever Young

Now you're getting me teary-eyed
Twelve years with the baby faced angel and I never made a move on her!
What was I supposed to do?!
I'm impressed sad!

Mini Stage/END

Postscript.

Thank you for reading Game Rush volume two! This book took a lot of hard work to complete, but I was glad to write every panel of it. The two parts I wanted to draw the most in the series was Yuuki's "third question" in the first chapter of volume one and page 178 of this book (Plus, getting to draw 16-year-old Sayako in her school blazer.) It was a blessing to draw! These two aren't your average friends. You could almost see them as two sides of one coin. I hope you were able to feel the unique, subtle bond between them.

Special Thanks:

Assistants: Mikorunsama
Makoto Sakura-sama
My wonderful little sister

And to those whom I've caused so much trouble for.
My editor, H-sama

For always making me delicious meals.
My wonderful mother

And to you for reading this!
Thank you so very much!